

BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT

I. DEPARTMENT MISSION OR MANDATE OR GOAL

To become the preferred leader in building inspection services by helping customers achieve their construction goals and by enhancing the quality of communities through revitalization of neighborhoods.

II. MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

A. APPLICATION AND PERMIT CENTER

The Application and Permit Center (APC) exists to make the processing of land development permits easier for its customers. This is accomplished by providing them as many development related services as possible at one (1) location. The service delivery team at the APC is comprised of staff from the Building Inspection Department, the Public Works Department and the Community Development Department.

The three (3) land development departments' work closely with the Environmental Health Department, the fire districts, school districts and the sanitation district to provide a coordinated and efficient approach to the processing of development related permits. Working together on a consistent basis has resulted in a more efficient development review process. Having several departments working together in one location has developed an appreciation for the difficulty applicants' face when attempting to complete a project.

BUDGET: \$129,900

FTE: 2

B. ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Engineering Services Division reviews plan drawings, structural design calculations, foundation, fire safety, job specifications, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, Title 24 energy conservation and handicapped requirements of the building to comply to the applicable codes and ordinances. Once the review is completed, fees are calculated and the documents required for issuance of the building permit are prepared.

The Division concentrates on the more important requirements of structural and fire safety and provides this assistance through seven (7) licensed structural engineers. In addition to the unincorporated area of the county, the department also provides plan review services for nine cities, Clayton, El Cerrito, Hercules, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Pittsburg, San Pablo and Walnut Creek. This Division also reviews structural documents and plans for energy plants in the City of Pittsburg and one in the

unincorporated area of Antioch. This Division also provides technical and code compliance information to building inspectors, plan checkers, architects and engineers, developers, and homeowners.

BUDGET: \$1,813,735
FTE: 18

C. CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION

The Construction Inspection Division provides field inspection of plumbing, mechanical, electrical, structural and grading components to ensure compliance with approved plans, codes and ordinances to achieve structurally sound and safe foundations and buildings. Through contractual agreement the Division provides plan review and field inspection services for the City of Hercules and City of El Cerrito, field inspection services for the City of Pittsburg, building official services for the City of San Pablo, and has established a ten (10) person office in Lafayette (Lamorinda Building Inspection Office) for building inspection services for the cities of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. The Division recently began providing inspection services through the East County Office in the City of Brentwood. The Division also provides project management, plan review and field inspection services for two energy plants in the City of Pittsburg, and one in Antioch.

BUDGET: \$3,379,969
FTE: 34.86

D. PROPERTY CONSERVATION

The Property Conservation Division responds to building and housing code violation complaints, abates hazardous structures, inspects mobile homes on private property and in 41 mobile home parks, inspects moved buildings and directs the activation of P.G.&E. services. The Division also administers the Neighborhood Preservation and Weatherization programs for the County. The Division trains and supervises the code enforcement officers and maintains weekly site visits to all supervisorial offices.

BUDGET: \$2,182,813
FTE: 29

E. LAND INFORMATION

The Land Information Division provides information technology services to the Building Inspection Department as well as network and related services to the Community Development Department. In addition, it supports the mainframe based Land Information System and the County Agencies Permit System (CAPS) for a number of other County departments, cities, and districts.

BUDGET: \$476,211

FTE: 4

F. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

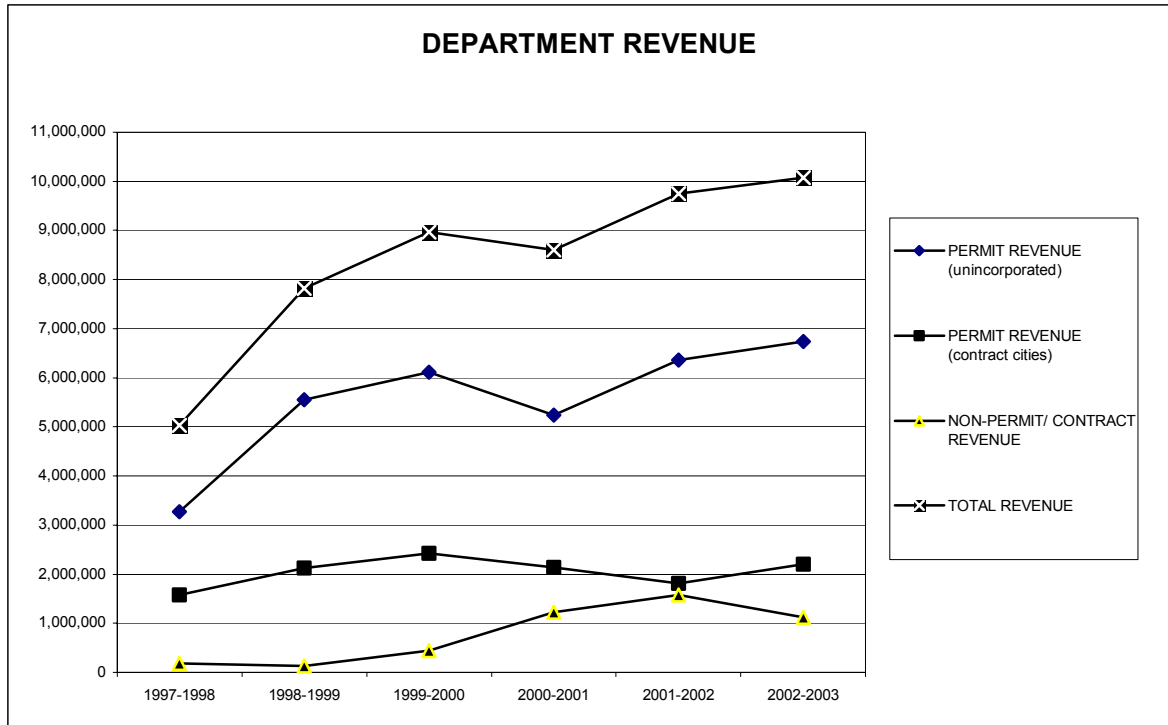
The Department's Administrative Services Division provides overall management and direction for the Department. It provides administrative support for the Department's operating divisions including facilities and fleet management. The Division helps develop and implement departmental policies and procedures. It coordinates training programs for each division. It prepares and monitors the Department's budget and performs personnel related functions. The Division researches permit archives and issues permits for major subdivisions and miscellaneous projects. Responds to approximately 150 telephone calls per day related to the permit issuance and inspections.

BUDGET: \$1,334,743

FTE: 17.75

G. DEPARTMENT DATA

Budget	2001–2002	2002–2003	Percentage Difference
Revenue	9,744,720	10,069,251	3.3%
Expenditures	9,580,654	9,671,785	0.9%



STAFF PROFILE OF FUNDED POSITIONS – by Job Type

Class	Allocated Positions
Inspectors	50
Clerical Support	20
Engineers/Plan Checkers	16
Accounting/Admin/Info. System	10
Management	6
Total	102

EMPLOYEE PROFILE – by Ethnicity

	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	4	4	8	8%
African/American	6	8	14	15%
Pacific Is/Asian	11	2	13	13%
Native American	1	0	1	1%
Minority Totals	22	14	36	37%
Caucasian	40	20	60	63%
Total	56	30		
Percent	65%	35%		

III. DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. On July 16, 2002, the Board of Supervisors recognized the Building Inspection Department for being awarded the 2002 NACo Achievement Award. The award was EARNED for the program entitled "Partnerships in Action". NACo confers this competitive award to recognize counties that "work to promote responsible, responsive and effective County government". The program provides comprehensive building services to cities within the county. These services include the following:

- Plan check
- Project management
- Field inspection
- Building Official duties
- Code Enforcement
- Grading
- Business information
- Administration/Coordination of building standards
- Accounting

As a result of this program, the Department has been able to increase the number of cities with which it has contractual agreements to provide services from five to eleven cities in the last three years. Additionally, providing services on a contractual basis has enabled the Department to increase its revenue, keep basic fee rates low and provide efficient services by using economies of scale.

In its effort to market the program, the Department developed a brochure and other marketing materials to describe the range of services being offered. In addition, the Department developed a standardized contract and a staffing module to respond to a city's needs. By providing services to city residents, the County Building Inspection Department is also able to improve code interpretation consistency and increase the cost effectiveness of the various services. As a result, the Department has enhanced inter-governmental coordination with cities.

B. EXTERNAL CONTRACTS

Several contracts have been made with other jurisdictions indicative of the Department's willingness and capability to assist neighbors and demonstrating internal teamwork.

Contract with the City of Albany. The Building Inspection Department (BID) entered into a contract with the City of Albany to provide plan check and inspection services on an as needed basis.

C. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The Department revised its disaster preparedness manual to address the expanded role of the Department in the County's disaster preparedness efforts. Every employee in the Department, including contract employees, was provided training relative to the Department's role in the aftermath of a major regional event.

During the months of April and May, employees in certain classes will be provided with postdisaster safety assessment evaluation training. This training will enable staff to perform damage assessment tasks, and offers a comprehensive view of control and supervision in a postdisaster environment.

D. STREAMLINING OF PERMIT ISSUANCE PROCESS

The Department developed an express counter at the Application and Permit Center. This counter will enable customers with basic building permit needs to obtain them in an expedited fashion. An express window was established in the middle of April 2003 to accept all permit categories that the department accepts through its fax permit program, as well as a drop-off service.

The Department also added a Senior Clerk position to serve as plans librarian to track and help process building plans. This significant investment has dramatically improved customer service and reduced error rates.

E. TRAINING

The Department has embarked on a major training effort in the area of disability access compliance. The Department has assigned a Senior Building Inspector as the coordinator for disability access training. As a result, training sessions are scheduled at least once a month on the subject of disability access for all building inspectors. In addition, the Department is in the process of seeking proposals from consultants to provide a comprehensive training program in the area of disability access. Once selected, the consultant will also be expected to submit effectiveness reports.

The Department converted existing office space to accommodate multimedia presentations. This room now serves as a training center for the Department. The Department used this training center to provide training to all its employees in the following software: Word, Excel, Access and Lotus Notes.

F. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

During the last year, the Land Information Systems (LIS) Division undertook a variety of upgrades. The Department website was overhauled, and a variety of documents pertaining to fees, codes and process milestones were added. The intent of this enhancement was to provide additional information and to serve as a resource for County employees assisting land development customers. The Division also embarked on an ambitious project to implement e-commerce, which would eventually enable the Department to issue permits on line. Cameras have been installed and, once operational, will enable Department employees at the three offices to communicate and view physical documents simultaneously. This will significantly enhance customer service by eliminating unnecessary customer trips.

A code enforcement case-tracking module has been implemented. This module will consolidate code enforcement data, eliminate double entries and be able to generate management reports.

G. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The Board of Supervisors passed a comprehensive Community Preservation Program in December 2002. The Board action was preceded by two years of research and collaboration between staff from various county departments and supervisorial offices. The set of ordinances establish minimum standards for the maintenance of residential real property and prohibit nuisances on residential properties. It also requires security fencing for vacant lots and boarding of substandard buildings to prevent nuisances. These ordinances have helped to strengthen the County's code enforcement programs.

IV. DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES

A. INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENT

The reduction in non-permit funds to the Department Code Enforcement Program (estimated to be \$35,000) will require the Department to augment its contribution to the County's code enforcement effort.

B. INTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATION

1. The continued efforts to streamline the Application and Permit Center will necessitate the increased cooperation of all the Land Development Departments.
2. The continued cooperation to share IT (information technology) goals will require the continued partnership in Graphic Information Systems (GIS).

3. The streamlining of permits will require reducing the turnaround time for plan checking, as well as provide simple permits (i.e., plumbing, electrical, mechanical, reroofing, water heaters) via the Internet.

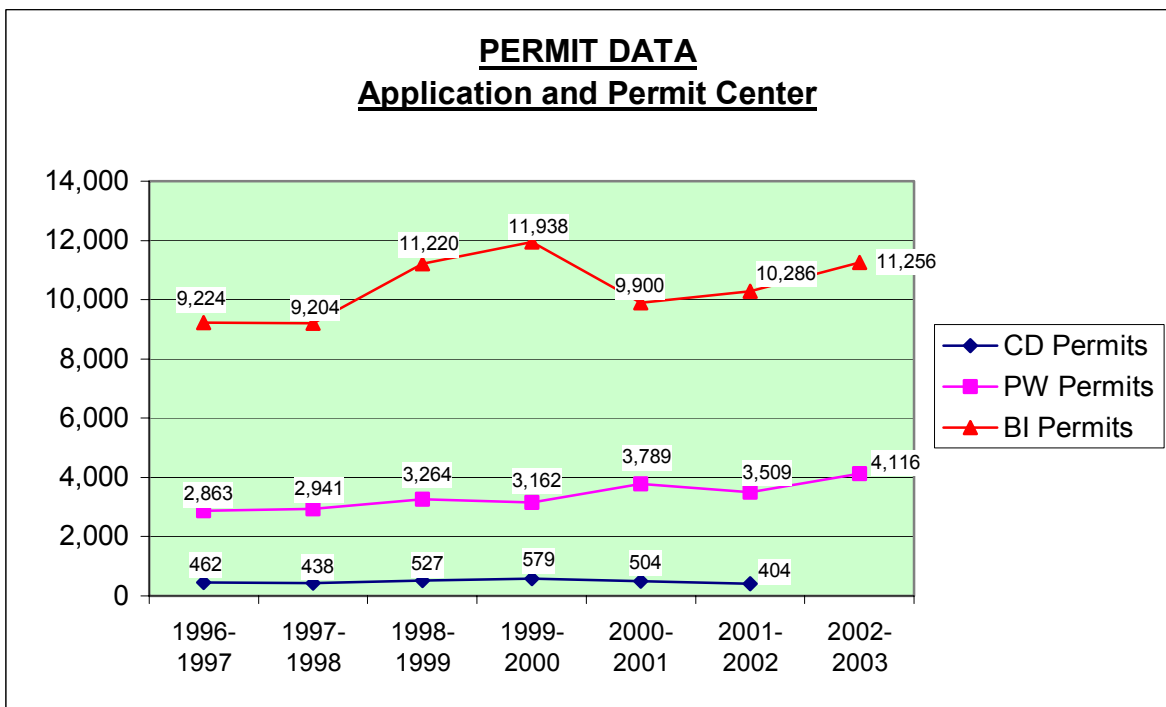
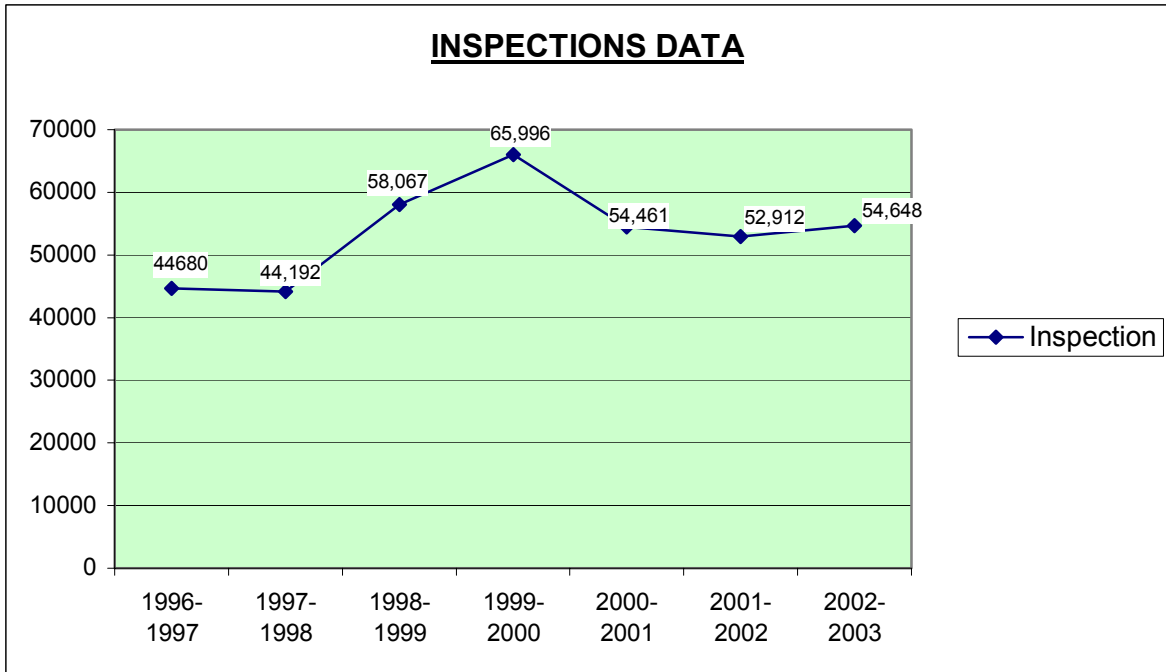
C. EXTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATION

1. The continuation of outside revenue producing contracts will require balancing staffing patterns to adequately meet the needs of county residents in the unincorporated area as well as the cities.
2. The opening of the East County office will require the redirection of services from Martinez and a strategy for effective coordination.

V. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A. PERMIT PROCESSING

During fiscal year 2002-2003, the Department visited area homes and businesses 54,648 times to ensure that safe building standards are utilized in accordance with the 11,256 permits issued. While the number of inspections in the unincorporated areas have fluctuated slightly the number of inspections in contract cities have increased. The Neighborhood Preservation Program used Federal grants to rehabilitate the homes of qualified residents by providing 28 loans totaling \$879,800. Similarly, the Weatherization Program helped 577 clients during the period of July 1, 2002 to February 28, 2003. As a result the Department used \$52,504 of State and Federal energy funds to help clients. The funds (non-county) were utilized for the betterment of the County's neediest residents.



B. PERMIT ISSUANCE

PERMIT PROCESSING & ISSUANCE INDICATORS		ACTUAL PERFORMANCE 02-03
Residential	Plan Review within 2 weeks	92%
Commercial	Plan Review within 3 weeks	70%
Tenant Improvement	Plan Review within 1 week	97%

The Department's structural engineers and plan checkers maintained high response times despite strong demand for plan review services.

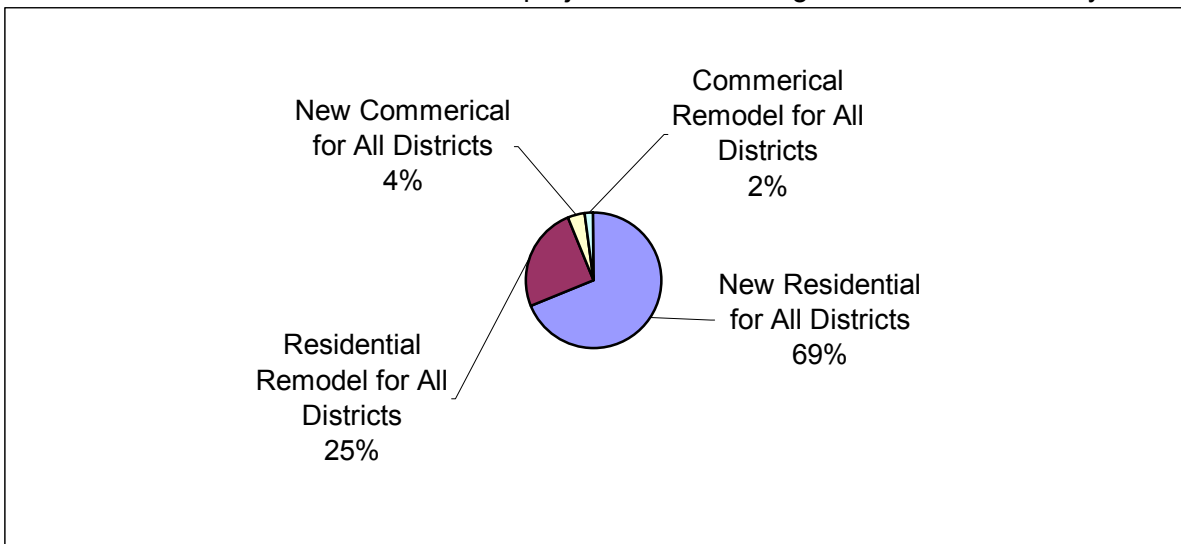
C. CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION

CONSTRUCTION INDICATORS		ACTUAL PERFORMANCE 01-02
Residential/Commercial	10 inspections per day	14.2 per inspector per day
Grading	Residential/Commercial – 3 per day	3.9 per inspector per day

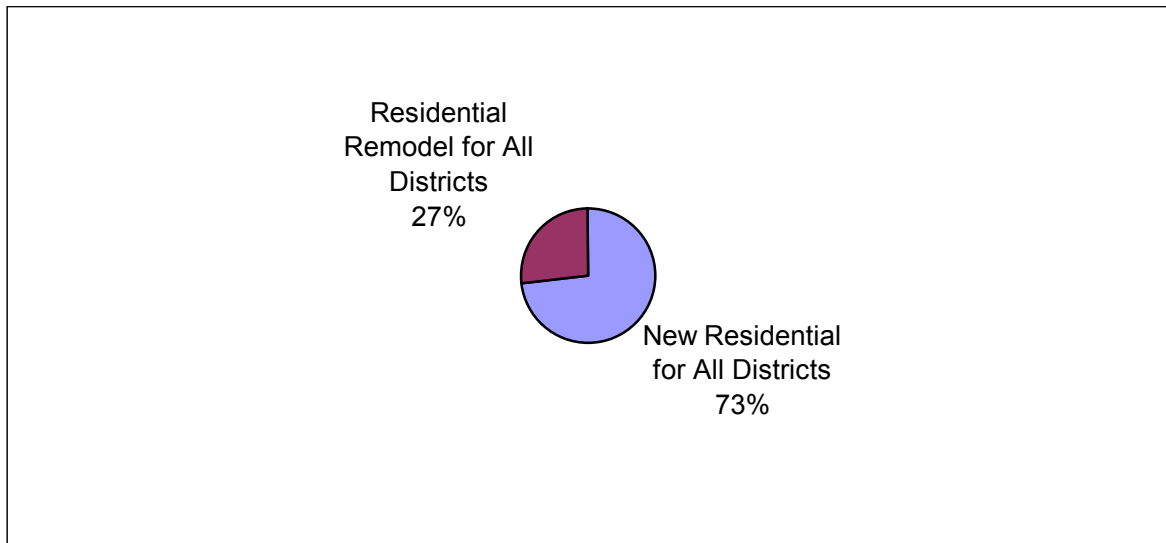
The Department's inspection staff was highly productive in relation to industry standards in performing the 54,648 inspections.

	TOTAL VALUATION FY 2002-2003	PERCENT
New Residential for All Districts	\$396,849,659	69%
Residential Remodel for All Districts	147,198,825	25%
New Commercial for All Districts	23,138,395	4%
Commercial Remodel for All Districts	11,984,083	2%
TOTAL:	\$579,170,963	100%

The total valuation for FY 2002-2003 is projected to be 39% greater than last fiscal year.



The valuation date is a good barometer to determine the amount of work being handled by the Department. Valuation is the construction activity during the year defined by labor, materials, and profit.



D. PROPERTY CONSERVATION

CODE ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE						
Types	Total Cases	New* Cases in Year	Carryover from 6/31/02	Cases Open on 3/1/03	Cases Closed	Duration**
BI ¹	378	262	116	112	266	73.00
Zoning ²	446	287	159	91	355	72.80
Delegated Review ³	131	17	114	125	6	160.0
Posted ⁴	52	19	33	37	15	310.0
Totals	1,007	585	422	365	642	

* July 1, 2002 through February 28, 2003 (Numbers based on calendar days)

**Excludes cases over 500 calendar days

For additional information pertaining to the Department, please visit the Department's updated web site at <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/bi/index.htm>.

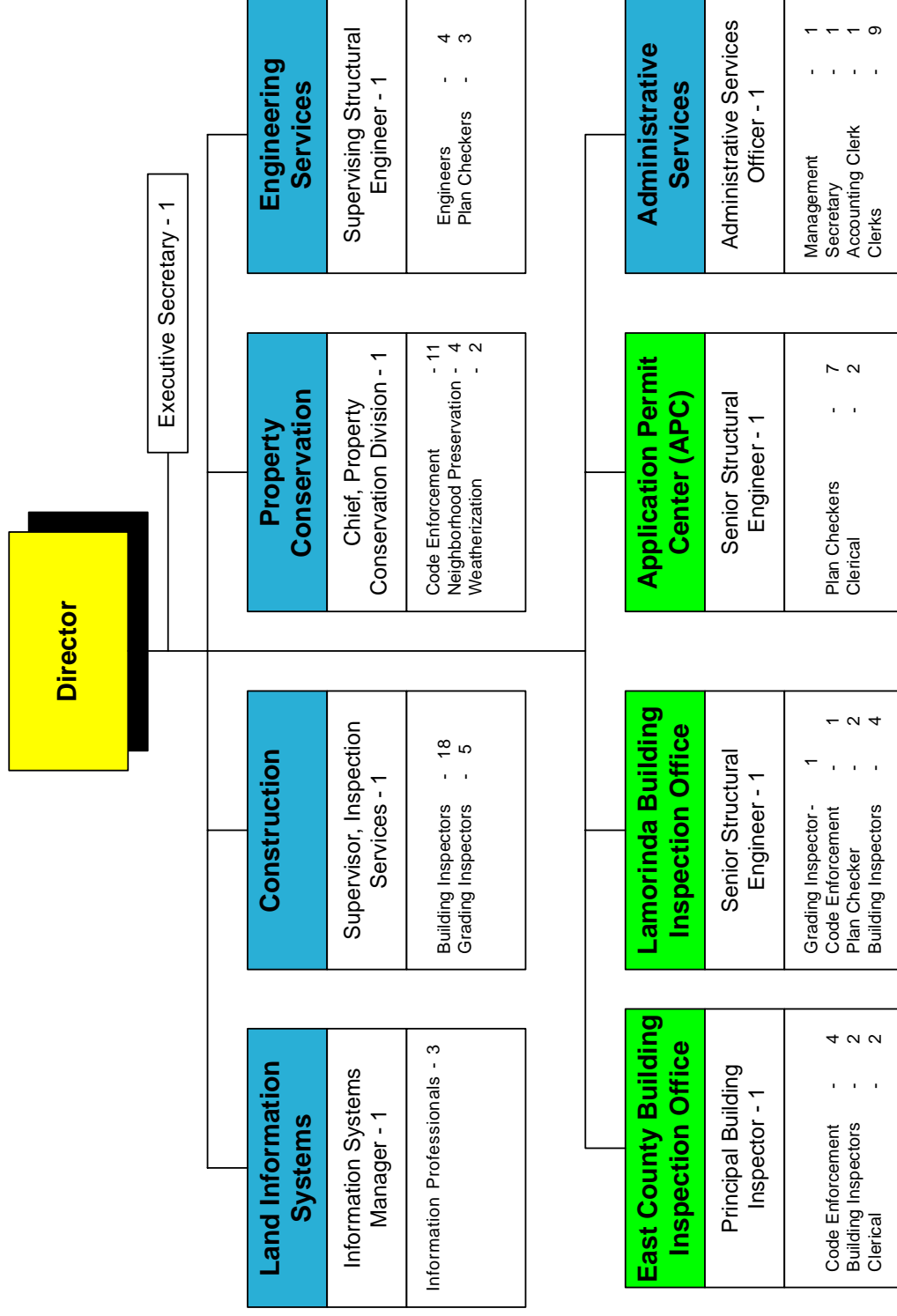
¹ Cases that are under Title 7 and need a building permit without Planning approval.

² Cases that are under Title 8 and need required Community Development and Planning review.

³ Cases that require other departments to review and approve (i.e., Public Works, Environmental Health and Community Development), or in probate.

⁴ Cases where a "Notice & Order" has been issued, and they remain there until a lien is recorded and cleared.

**BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZATION CHART
MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS
FEBRUARY 2003**



Total Positions 108
Positions Filled 96
Vacant Positions 12